

EU team sees immigration process at Sialkot airport

By Waseem Ashraf Butt

GUJRAT: A high-level European Union delegation visited the Sialkot International Airport on Friday to monitor the immigration process and measures to prevent irregular migration, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) spokesman said in a statement.

The team included FRONTEX Liaison Officer to Pakistan, Representative from Embassy of Hungary along with the representative from ICMPD. It was given a comprehensive briefing on the working, performance and achievements of FIA Immigration, Sialkot airport, with particular emphasis on the progress made over the last five months.

According to *Dawn.com*, the move follows the off-loading of more than 66,000 passengers across Pakistan last year amid a post-2024 Greece boat tragedy crackdown on migrant smuggling.

According to the FIA spokesperson, the delegation was given a comprehensive briefing on the working, performance, and achievements of the FIA Immigration at the Sialkot airport, with particular emphasis on the progress made over the last five months.

“The briefing focused on measures taken to prevent irregular migration, including the effective implementation of risk indicators, enhanced profiling mechanisms, and optimal utilisation of the Second Line Border Control Office,” the statement added.

The spokesperson stated that the EU delegation was further apprised of the pre-departure facilitation mechanisms established at both the zonal level and the airport, aimed at strengthening border management, improving operational efficiency, and creating a passenger-friendly environment. The immigration border management system (IBMS) data analysis of the July-December 2024 period revealed the trend of passengers travelling to at least 15 countries.

The data analysis showed that most of the passengers travelling to these transit destinations are mainly from nine districts of Punjab, including Sialkot. The delegation also visited the FIA zonal office in Gujranwala where a Risk Analysis Unit has been formed. Zonal Director Muhammad Bin Ashraf briefed the delegation on sustained and targeted efforts of Gujranwala zone to curb irregular migration.

The director said the zonal unit was a major milestone in strengthening data-driven risk profiling. Mr Ashraf also apprised the delegation of key institutional advancements currently underway within FIA, including the digitisation of the Case Management System.

10 Katcha gangsters lay down arms

By Our Correspondent

RAHIM YAR KHAN: Ten members of Sikhani and Kosh gangs have surrendered to the police and laid down their arms, claimed District Police Officer (DPO) Irfan Ali Samoon on Friday.

According to him, after a formal warning from the police, the Sikhani gang members surrendered and laid down their weapons. A group from the Kosh gang also laid down their arms and turned themselves over to the police. The armed gang members courted arrest at the Garhi Khair Muhammad Jhak police picket in the Katcha area in the jurisdiction of the Bhong Police Station.

The gangsters were wanted for serious crimes, including kidnap for ransom, robbery, looting and armed encounters with the police.

According to the DPO, the gangsters who surrendered included Tariq, Hakim, Baloch, Mewa Sikhani and Saleem Dashti of Sikhani Gang while Jewan, Shah Paru, Khatura and Qurban Jho Kosh from Kosh Gang. Samoon emphasized that the law would take its course and all the gangsters would have to face the courts regarding the cases registered against them.



LAHORE: A street vendor serves traditional hot chicken soup with boiled eggs to customers to keep them warm during an extreme cold spell. — APP

ECP summons CS, LG secretary over delay in electoral exercise

Issues schedule for delimitation of wards in 42 cantonment boards

By Iftikhar A Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned the Punjab Chief Secretary and the Local Government Secretary to appear in person before the commission on Jan 22 to explain delay in activities required to hold long-delayed local elections in the province, an informed source told *Dawn* on Friday.

“This step is being taken to ensure urgent action is initiated to hold LG Elections in Punjab, which were consti-

tutionally due for a long time,” an official said, pointing out that the term of local governments in Punjab had ended over four years ago on Dec 31, 2021.

He noted that provincial government has repeatedly delayed elections by amending electoral laws and using various excuses.

He said it was constitutional and legal obligation of both the Punjab government and the ECP to ensure timely local elections.

“The Election Commission’s action is aimed at fulfilling this duty and moving forward with the electoral process without further delay”, he added.

Dismaied by the failure of the Punjab government to meet the timeline for various activities required to pave the way for the conduct of LG elections in the province, the ECP had

earlier this week decided to take up the matter.

The assurance to complete the prerequisites for LG polls had been given to the commission in October last year by the Punjab chief secretary, who had himself provided the timeline.

A letter expressing the ECP’s disappointment had been sent to the Secretary, Local Government and Community Development Department, Punjab, Lahore.

The letter, sent by *Dawn*, stated that the matter has been discussed at the highest level and that the commission has taken a serious view of the failure to meet the agreed timeline and fulfil the assurances given by the government.

It deplored that the matter was left open-ended, without any fresh timeline

being provided for the completion of all related activities. The letter states that, keeping in view the situation and the fact that the conduct of local government elections in the province has already been considerably delayed, the ECP decided to fix the matter for hearing and take appropriate steps with regard to the conduct of local government elections in Punjab. “The due date for the hearing shall be conveyed soon,” the letter said.

Meanwhile, the ECP on Friday issued a schedule for delimitation of wards in 42 cantonment boards in the four provinces for local government elections.

According to the notification, the process will commence on Jan 19 and the notification of final list of delimitation of wards by the delimitation committees will be issued on April 20.

36pc of patients don’t get free medicines, 31pc get bad treatment

Official feedback survey reveals other issues also like rude behaviour of staff, long wait, bribe

By Asif Chaudhry

LAHORE: A patient feedback report got by the Chief Minister’s Special Monitoring Unit (SMU) has blatantly exposed the falling treatment standards at the teaching hospitals across the province when it transpired that 719 patients out of total 1,976 complained that they were not provided with free medicines while 622 said that the duty doctors didn’t treat them properly. It means 36 percent complained of missing facility of free medicines while 31pc complained against lack of treatment by the doctors in public sector hospitals.

The report reveals Mayo Hospital Lahore was at the top among others where the most number of patients (54) filed complaints of non-cooperation of the doctors, followed by 52 in the Nishtar Hospital Multan and 48 in the Children’s Hospital Lahore.

Similarly, Sahiwal Teaching Hospital, Sheikh Zayed Rahim Yar Khan, Jinnah Hospital Lahore, Bahawalpur Victoria Hospital, and Punjab Institute of Cardiology were the other leading public sector teaching institutions where most of the

patients filed complaints against the doctors.

The SMU has submitted ‘Patient Feedback Report on Tertiary Care Hospitals of Punjab’ (a copy available with *Dawn*) to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. The report was also sent to the Punjab health minister and the health secretary, seeking appropriate action against those found negligent in the patients’ feedback.

“A detailed report outlining the corrective measures and action taken should be submitted to the SMU,” reads the report, stating that these concerns should also be rectified promptly.

As per the report, the SMU has been gathering citizens’ feedback via outbound calls to ensure the efficient delivery of the services to the citizens. The unit conducted the analysis of the feedback calls made to the patient based on the data provided by the department of teaching hospitals in Punjab.

About the complaints of non-availability of free medicines, the report said that the Mayo Hospital Lahore was again at the top with 94 patients submitting their serious grievances in this respect followed by Shaikh Zayed Hospital Rahim Yar Khan where 75 patients filed such complaints. Fifty-nine patients of the Jinnah Hospital Lahore, 55 each of Nishtar Hospital Multan and Sahiwal Teaching Hospital, 51 of Behawalpur Victoria and 50 patients of the Children Hospital Lahore also

complained that they were forced to buy medicines from the private pharmacies.

About the multiple complaints, the SMU was told that the Mayo Hospital was again at the top among other teaching hospitals where 191 patients expressed their grievances, followed by Children Hospital Lahore with 156 and Shaikh Zayed Hospital Rahim Yar Khan with 154.

The miscellaneous complaints were related to the unavailability of free medicines, bad attitude of the doctors, allied staff, security guards, long waiting times, non-availability of beds etc.

The report stated 1,976 patients were contacted by teams deputed by the SMU to get their feedback against 11 listed complaints. Of them, 209 patients reported that the allied staff of the teaching hospitals behaved rudely with them, 155 complained of long wait for surgeries, tests and other treatment processes while 75 patients said they were charged for lab tests.

Similarly, the SMU also got many complaints of unavailability of beds, rude behaviour of security guards, denial of admissions, bribes by relevant staff, dysfunctional equipment, etc.

The report also pointed out that the hospitals put in the admission record 3,576 wrong mobile phone/contact numbers of the patients/attendants, causing inconvenience to the SMU to contact them to get feedback.

Bushra’s daughter moves high court against Adiala officials

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Daughter of Bushra Bibi, the incarcerated wife of PTI founding chairman Imran Khan, on Friday approached the Lahore High Court against the Adiala jail authorities for not allowing her to visit her mother.

Mubashra Khawar Maneka filed a petition before the court, listing the inspector general of prisons, the superintendent of Adiala jail, Rawalpindi, and others as respondents.

The petition, filed through Lahore High Court Bar Association President Malik Asif Nissoana, pointed out that the Adiala jail administration had barred Ms Maneka from meeting her imprisoned mother without providing any written reason to the petitioner.

It said that despite Ms Maneka being a blood relation and Tuesday being the designated day for meetings, permission was not granted to the petitioner to visit her jailed mother.

It pleaded that the petitioner, being a daughter of Bushra Bibi, is deeply concerned about her mother’s physical, emotional and psychological well-being.

The petition argued that the actions of the jail authorities amounted to mala fide intent and misuse of authority.

It asked the court to issue directions to the respondents for an immediate meeting of Ms Maneka with her mother.

Bushra Bibi is serving a seven-year sentence in the £190 million corruption case. She was recently handed down 17 years imprisonment in the Toshakhana-II case, which contains charges of purchasing an expensive jewellery set gifted to the former prime minister Imran Khan by the Saudi crown prince during his May 2021 visit.

Rainwater storage tanks project likely to complete by Feb 15

The initiative will also help prevent urban flooding, raise water table

By Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: A mega project envisaging rainwater harvesting through construction of underground storage tanks is likely to be completed by Feb 15, as the civil work on most of the tanks has entered the finishing stage.

Besides harvesting rainwater, the project will also help control urban flooding during the monsoon and raise the depleting water table in Lahore city district, according to senior officials engaged in supervising the project.

Last year, three storage tanks, under the project’s scope of work were completed at Lawrence Garden (Bagh-i-Jinnah), Kashmir Road (lawn of Alhamra complex) and Sheranwala Gate. The work on 10 more tanks was initiated last year with a completion timeframe of six to eight months.

These tanks are currently being con-

structed at Gaddafi Stadium, Tikka Chowk (Johar Town), Mehran Block (Allam Iqbal Town), Ali Block (Garden Town), Sharif Park (Ichhra), Waris Road (Queens Road, near Mozang), Railway Station Chowk, Karim Park, Cooper Road and Tajpura. At present, the work on these storage tanks has entered the final phase.

“The total water storage capacity of these 10 ponds, each having 20-foot depth, is 22 million gallons. A recharge well is also being constructed close to each tank so it can have water from the tank to raise the groundwater table. Some of these tanks were made partially operational in last monsoon to the extent of receiving water from accumulation points. But without the recharge wells, these tanks remain incomplete,” Lahore Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) Managing Director (MD) Ghufra Ahmad told *Dawn* on Friday.

The MD claimed that last year, the accumulation of rainwater and urban flooding were prevented at a couple of points due to rainwater harvesting through the storage tanks. So, the completion of these 10 ponds will help Wasa avert urban flooding in critical areas and raise the groundwater table,



he maintained.

To a question, Mr Ghufra said the 10 storage ponds are being constructed along with the recharge wells at a cost of Rs7.7 billion. “On completion of three ponds last year, a sum amounting to Rs600 to Rs800 million was spent,” he said, adding that the completion of the under-construction ponds will take a maximum one month more.

Meanwhile, in a briefing given to housing, urban development and public health engineering department’s secretary, the

Wasa MD said that the construction work on the Gaddafi Stadium underground water tank has almost been completed, while the Cooper Road tank nears 98 percent completion and civil works at Karim Park tank is also 97pc complete.

He said that the Garden Town tank is 96pc complete, while Iqbal Town’s has reached 94pc completion. Similarly, the tanks at Waris Road and Railway Station are 91pc complete, while the Tajpura tank has reached 65pc completion. The work on the Shama Road water tank stands at 45pc, he says.

“With introduction of modern engineering solutions in Lahore, these storage tanks reflect the government’s innovative and future-oriented priorities. In the past, urban flooding was considered a routine in the city. However, the present government has taken practical steps to ensure a sustainable solution to this long-standing issue,” says Secretary retired Capt Noorul Amin Mengal.

He says in the coming year, more water storage tanks would be constructed, not only in Lahore, but also in other cities, to ensure better management of rainwater and mitigation of urban flooding.